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A SERMON of CHRISTS *Miracles.*

Preached by ARTHVR DENT, *Minister of the Word of God,* at South-shoobery in ESSEX.

The seauenth Impression.

ACT. 3. VER. 6.

Then said Peter, *siluer and gold haue I none, but such as I haue that giue I thee; in the name of Iesus Christ of Nazareth, rise vp and walke.*

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A Sermon of CHRIST'S *Miracles.*

IOHN. 9. 16.

Then ſaid ſome of the Phariſes: This man is not of God, becauſe hee keepeth not the Sabboth: others ſaid: How can a man that is a ſinner doe ſuch miracles? And there was diſſention among them.

N this text is ſet down a double opinion which the Phariſées held concerning Chriſt, & eſpecially concerning the works which he had wrought among them. Some of them haue peremptorily and flatly condemned him, ſaying: that he was a man that was not of God: & they render a reaſon, or rather a ſhadow of a reaſon: namely becauſe he keepeth not the Sabboth, but their opinion was raſh, and their iudgement falſe and erronious, proceeding from the malice and hatred of the perſon of Chriſt. Alſo that which they haue vſed for a reaſon, wee haue ſhewed that it is likewiſe falſe: for CHRIST was ſo farre from breaking the Sabba-

oah, or any part of the law, that he did in full perfection fulfill the whole lawe of God.

Now followeth the opinion of the second sort of Phariſes, which ſaid: How can a man that is a ſinner do ſuch miracles? as if the holy Ghoſt ſhould ſay. If our Sauiour Chriſt were ſuch a prophaner and breaker of the Sabboth, as you ſurmiſe him to be, then it were impoſſible for him to doe ſuch ſtrange and wonderfull miracles, as wée ſée hée hath wrought: of this wee haue ſpoken before, and ſhall ſpeake more hereafter, when we haue ſpoken generally of Miracles of the workes of them: & therefore of the power of God, in working them, and alſo the power of angels, of Satan and of men therein. Whereas it is ſaid; How can man that is a ſinner do ſuch Miracles? theſe men doe inſinuate, that ſinners can doe ſuch miracles in the ſight of men, but to doe ſuch a miracle, as to cure a man being blind from his birth, was impoſſible for them. It is impoſſible that any ſinner ſhould doe this or any ſuch miracles which Chriſt did, wée are therefore to ſhewe, firſt, what a miracle is, that euery

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one vnderstanding the nature thereof, make such a proper and peculiar vse of the same, as he ought.

A Miracle is nothing else but a rare worke apparantly wrought by the sole omnipotent power of God, cleane contrary to the order and instinct of nature, far aboue nature or naturall causes.

I vse so many words, that I may speake to the capacity of all the people, whereas otherwise I might vse fewer, we are therefore first to know, that it is a worke, for indeede it must bee in it selfe a true worke, deed, or fact, otherwise it cannot in it selfe, and of it selfe, make men to muse and marvell at it: at least it cannot make wise men to marvell at it. If therefore it bee a miracle, it must be a sensible worke, not a worke in shew, illusion and deceit, but a worke in nature, in deed, and in truth: if it bee but an appearance of a worke, it is no miracle. If it be onely an illusion of the senses it is no miracle. It is then true ỹ the illusions of Sathan are no miricles, for he doth nothing but delude the senses of mee; neither is it the celerity or agility of mens hands which are miracles, as of Juglers, which

deceiue the people by all actiuity in contriuing the thing which they do. For they do not any true worke, but by their derterity deceiue mens senses. These therefore are no miracles, for euery miracle must bée a true worke, and fact indéed. I therefore first call a miracle, a worke, to seperate it from those that séeme to bé miracles, and yet are not, as by the works of Satan and his members, and also those that are done by agility of man, which are workes in shew but not indeede. This kinde of miracle, which is a true worke, hath béene wrought by diuers of Gods Children, as Moses when hee was sent to deliuer the people of Israell out of Egipt did worke many miracles, to testifie that he was sent of the Lord. He made Frogs, not in appearance, but indeed. Hée turned the water of the riuer into blood, not in appearance but indeede. So also Elias wrought miracles, not in shew but in déed: So Christ wrought Miracles, not in shew but indeed: for Lazarus beeing dead indéed, he raised him vp againe indéed: when the wine wãted at the marriage he turned water indéed into wine indéed, as pure

wine

wine as any insued out of the Wine, and so are all the miracles that he did, workes in deed & not onely in appearance. When therefore wee see any wonderfull thing come to passe wée must examine it whether it be a worke indéed, or only in appearance. If it be not a worke indeed, as bée the illusions of Sathan, and of men, which deceiue the senses, and doe not bring any worke to passe, then is it not a true miracle. For euery true miracle which the Lord hath wrought himselfe, or any of the Prophets, or our Sauiour Christ, haue béene true works. Secondly, I shall call it a rare worke of God, for the workes of GOD, there be some which are vsuall, common & ordinary: as the preseruation of mankind, is an ordinary & vsuall work of God, and it is truely said of the holy Ghost: that wée liue, moue and haue our being in the Lord: yet because this is vsuall, ordinary, & common, yea daily and hourely, (for the Lord doth ordinarily euery day and houre, preserue men, otherwise they could not liue) I say because it is ordinary, daily & hourly, we cannot properly call it a miracle, for it doth make men to marueil, to muse, to be

amazed and astonied at it, seeing it is so vsuall and ordinary among them.

For it is the nature of miracles to make men muse and maruell at them, and therefore when as in the Euangelists, any miracle, which our saiour Christ wrought is set downe there also immediately followeth, that the people were astonied: therefore that which is vsuall, and common, cannot properly be called a miracle. A miracle therefore must bee a rare worke of God, sildome brought to passe, & for this cause we cannot say that repentance, or regeneration is a miracle, for although repentance be wrought in few, yet is it not properly a miracle, because it is ordinarily, & vsually at one time or other wrought in the harts of Gods children. There be also many strange and wonderfull workes of nature: yet because they are not rare but vsuall and ordinary, they bee no miracles. An Adamant stone (we know not by what force) will draw Iron to it selfe: Iron is heauy of it selfe and of it selfe cannot possibly mooue from place to place, yet an Adamant if it be aboue it will draw it to it selfe: which is very strange and admirable

admirable, yet because it is vsuall and common, it cannot be called a miracle. So we may see the nature and power of some water to turne that which in nature is gold into stone: that is knowne to be true by experience, yet no man can shew any reason, why that water should rather do it, then any other.

Although this be strange and wonderfull, yet because it is vsuall and ordinary, in these waters, it is no miracle: for euery miracle is a rare worke that commeth to passe not ordinarily but very seldome.

This worke is called rare, either in regard of the thing wrought, or in regard of the manner of working it.

First in respect of the thing wrought as when the Lord sent downe Manna from heauen, to feed such a great number of people as the Israelites were, this was very rare in regard of the thing wrought. So when the Lord made the Sunne to stay in the elemen: so likewise (as we may read) when the Lord made the shadow of ỹ diall to go back. Secondly a miracle is rare in regard of the manner of working it, as when the water was turned into blood,

if

it was not a rare thing to see bloud, but the manner of working it as namely with a Rod, was most rare and was neuer seene before. So we doe see that Christs manner of healing the blind man, was very rare, therefore a miracle: if it be a miracle indeed, first it must be a true worke. Secondly a rare worke, either in regard of the thing it selfe, or in regard of the manner of doing it.

Apparantly wrought &c.

Thirdly, a miracle must haue this annexed vnto it: for it must not bee obscure, but apparant, I meane not to the reason and iudgement of men, but to mans sense that is, to some of his senses, or to all of them, without controuersie or doubting. This wee shall see in all true miracles wrought by God, to bee of this nature namely cleare and euident to mans senses: for either men did feele them as the darknes in Egypt, or else they might touch them, taste them, or smell them. When the Lord brought his people of Israell from Egypt al the miracles which he by his power, had wrought among them, were most apparent vnto mans sense. As namely

when

when they went through the red sea, there he made the waters to deuide themselues, and to stand like mighty mountaines on each side of them: in such sort that they did most manifestly see, and behold the same. So likewise they saw when Moses strooke the stony rock, so that thereout gushed water. So they saw most euidently the walls of Iericho fall downe: and therfore if there be any miracle which is not apparent of it selfe, it is no miracle. Likewise what workes soeuer be done by Satan or any of his Angells, if it be not euident & to be discernd by mans sence, hence we know that it is no miracle. Let vs by this property of a true miracle, examine the miracle of the Altar of the Church of Rome, for in the sacrament of the Altar, after the Priest hath said a few words as these, (hoc est corpus meum) they teach ý there a strange worke is brought to passe: for the substance of the bread which was on the Altar, is gone and is changed into the body of Christ: if it were so then indeed it were a miracle: but if it be a miracle then men may discerne it by some sence or other: For let them shew mée an instance where the Lord wrought

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any miracle which hee did not subiect to the senses of man, but in this there is no miracle, which may bee discerned by the senses: for the bread in the iudgement of all the senses, seemeth the same that it was before to the sight, it seemeth to bee the very same in substance, of the same quality and coulour that it was before, it hath the same taste it had before, to the handling it appeareth the same that it was before, and hath the same smelling that it had before, there is not any sense that iudgeth now otherwise of it then it did before and therefore it can be no true miracle. Indeed if before I seeing it to be bread, tasting, smelling, and touching it, doe iudge it to bee bread, should now seeing, smelling, tasting and feeling it, perceiue it to be the body of Christ it were a true miracle: but seeing to all the senses it appeareth one and the same that it was before, it cannot be a miracle: but they say the outward forme and externall accident of the bread yet remaineth, but the substance of it is turned into the body of Christ, which though wee cannot perceiue by our senses, yet wee are to beleeue by faith. But how did Christ himselfe

selfe deale with Thomas, when hee doubted of his resurrection: he said: Thrust thy finger into my side, and feele whether I haue not flesh and bones, for a Spirit hath not as thou feelest me to haue: hée taketh away his doubt by the sence of feeling, and if this true naturall body of Christ were there in the bread, then might wee feele as Thomas did, for Christ still retaineth that his true and naturall body, although hée bee now glorified. In so much therefore that in the breade there is no miracle apparant to the sences, there is no miracle at all. But this is the difference (in Gods Church) that before it was common bread, ordained and sanctified by the Lord for the nourishment of our bodies, but now it is the holy bread, appointed, and set apart, and sanctified by the Lord, not so much for the nourishment of our bodies, but especially for the confirmation of our faith, and the foode of our soules. The same also is to be said of the wine.

Fourthly I adde; wrought by the sole omnipotent power of God. Wherein I note the workers of Miracles. The Lord himselfe worketh Miracles, but

peculiarly and properly by his power, and not by his wisdome though both be infinit and that a miracle is wrought by the power of God, I proue by these reasons. First a miracle is a worke of great power, farre passing the power of all creatures, therefore it must nedes bee wrought by that power of the Creator.

Secondly, it is apparent by diuers places of the word of God, as Ioel 2. 21. 30. there the holy Ghost ascribeth the working of miracles to the Lord himselfe. I wil shew wonders in heauen & earth, saith the Lord, I care not, O land, for I will doe great thinges. Thirdly, the holy Ghost vseth this as an argument to proue, that IEHOVAH is the Lord, and is onely to be serued. Leu. 26. Deu. 28. Albeit the Magitians of Egypt could worke many admirable wonders by their owne Art, and by the instructions of the Diuill, yet they confessed that the workes of Moses were not done by Moses power, nor yet by art or skil that was in Moses, nor by any natural causes, but by the finger of God, which is nothing else but his power. By this argument doth Christ proue, that his miracles

were

were not done by the power of Belzebub: If I by the finger of God cast out diuels, by whom do your children cast them out.

Lastly, this may also appeare by the consideration of the meanes which the Lord vseth in working of miracles. As the shadow of Peter to cure diseases. Can any mans shadow cure another? No, but the Lord would haue that this meanes should shew that the things were wrought by his power. So the Handkercher of Paul did cure diseases, not that there were any such vertues in it, but that it came from the Lord: So also did the hem of Christs garment: is there any power in the hem of a mans garment to cure diseases? surely no, but the Lord vseth that meanes to teach vs thereby that his power onely doth worke it. Here then we must acknowledge, that miracles are wrought onely by the Lord, and serue greatly to the aduancing of his glory.

Lastly, we must consider, that a miracle is contrary to the instinct of Nature. Nature had neuer any such inclination, as to bring to passe any miracle, as when the water stood on two parts, na-

nature had a desire to make the waters runne, when as then the waters stood it was contrary to nature.

The Vse.

THe vse that we must make hereof, is to giue to God that which is his own that we should acknowledg him to bee the sole author and worker of miracles, that either haue bene or shall be in the world. If thou giue them to Sathan then dost thou constitute him, instéed of the Lord himselfe: Art thou the Lords: then know that neither Sathan, nor any creature, is able to worke any miracle against thee. If thou be his, rather then his name should be dishonoured by thee, he will worke miraculously, for thy good and preseruation.

Further this serueth to ratifie our faith in the power of God. The Diuell is his seruant whether he will or not, he can doe nothing but that which the Lord willeth.

And heereby wee hold that our bodies shall be raised againe at the last day. For God is able to worke all miracles: although there be neither bone, skinne, nor

flesh

flesh left, yet hee is able to ioyne flesh to flesh, sinewe to sinewe, & raise vs vp againe with the same bodies we had before.

The second part of this Sermon

NOw remaineth something to be spoken more plainely and particularly of miracles, for as in all other thinges, so also in miracles, the Lord vseth diuers and sundry waies of working. For either himselfe alone, and of himselfe alone, or else he vseth some creature in ỹ working of the same. As in the creation of the world he vsed not any thing out of himselfe, but in himselfe, by himselfe, and of himselfe alone, he created all thinges of nothing. So like wise in the working of some miracles, it pleaseth him not to admit the vse of any creature whatsoeuer. As when hee stayed the sunne in the firmament he did it of himselfe without the helpe of any other, So also hee turned backe the shadow of the Dyall of Azah by him selfe alone without the vse of any other. But neuertheleſſe in working some miracles, he vseth meanes, but

especially man for the meanes thereof. As in all the Miracles wrought in Egypt, the Lord did worke them indeed, but by the hand of Moses and Aaron. He deuided the red Sea, so that Israell passed through on dry foote, but it was done by Moses. So also hee wrought many miracles in the wilderneſſe before the Israelites, but by the hands of Moses and Aaron. So some miracles were done by Iudges, some by Elizeus, and others of the Prophets. So also God wrought miracles afterwarde, not onely by his Sonne, but also by the hands of the Apoſtles. So that it is a true point of religion, to hould that the Lord in working of miracles, doth often times vſe the meanes of man therein. In this doctrine wee are to take hæde of theſe two dangerous points. Firſt, that we derogate nothing from ỹ Maieſty of God, although he vſe meanes in the working of many miracles. Secondly, that we doe not magnifie the Creature, which the Lord vſeth, aboue that which is conuenient. Into which very many haue fallen here-tofore. For the auoyding therefore of them, it is neceſſary to hould theſe two points of

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Religion: first to believe and know that the omnipotent power of GOD cannot be communicated to any creature. For the Lord saith, as of his wisdome, iustice and mercy, so also of his power. I will not giue my glory to another. Wee are therefore to hould that the power of God cannot beseeme any creature whatsoeuer, no though it be an Angell of Heauen. Secondly, that wee must knowe, remember, and constantly beleeue, that albeit the power of GOD could be communicated to any creature, either in heauen or in earth, yet that there is no creature capeable thereof, no creature is able to beare it. This is euident in the example of Peter: before whome, when CHRIST had wrought a miracle, and hee had seene some small sight of his glory, he said, Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinfull man. If Peter could not abide the glimmering of his glory, and if it brought his sinnes to memory, in so much that hee thought himselfe vnworthy of his presence: how much more vnable had hee beene to beare the weight thereof?

But (may some say) if this be so, why

then doth the Lord vse meanes in worke-ing of miracles? why doth hee vse men Prophets, Apostles, yea and those also which haue no iustifying faith, and also o-ther creatures? I answer, the Lord vseth them, not because he stands in néed of them (for he can worke all thinges of himselfe) neither vseth hee them that men should a-scribe lesse to him, and more to the crea-tures which he vseth, but for to teach vs these three thinges.

First to teach vs how his maiesty doth approue the meanes whereby thinges are brought to passe: for if the LORD vseth meanes when they bee of lesse vse, much more will hée approue when the meanes are vsed which haue some power to bring thinges to passe. This then is the first cause why the Lord vseth meanes, to shew that hée would haue vs kept, maintained, and liue in this world, but so, as by vsing such meanes as his maiesty shal appoint. Ther-fore no man ought to neglect and contemne the meanes, least he oppose himselfe against the Lord.

Secondly, the Lord vseth creatures in working miracles, to support and vphold

by hold mans weakenesse, who is not able to looke on his Maiesty, when hee worketh himselfe. This is plaine in the example of the Israelites. Exodus 19. when they came to Mount Sinai, to heare the Lord, there was such thunder and lightning, and the sound of a trumpet exceeding loud, and the Mount all of a smoake, because the Lord came downe by fire, they were so bereft of their sences, and were so affraid that afterward they desired the Lord not to speake to them himselfe any more, but that they might haue Moyses to speake vnto them, and they would heare him.

Thirdly the Lord vseth meanes for the tryall of our faith, of our religion, and conscience, whether wee will ascribe the worke that is wrought to the worker thereof, or to the meanes, or partly to the worker, or partly to the meanes, or as some doe, all to the meanes, and none to the worker. The Lord tryeth whether we will be constant, to ascribe the power that is in miracles vnto his Maiesty, for in the Miracles of Christ, wee see how diuersly they were expounded, albeit

they were effected by the finger of God, yet the Pharisées would not ascribe them to the worker but said, that hee wrought miracles by Belzebub the Prince of Diuels. This is the corruption of man and want of faith: they are ready to ascribe though not all, yet at the least some part of the miracle to creatures which are but the meane, and not wholly to the Lord, who is the onely worker of Miracles: for these causes the Lord vseth means in working miracles, to teach vs these things thereby, for all miracles are wrought: not for him but for our cause.

The meanes which the Lord vseth are of diuers sorts, but especially three.

First, some meanes which the Lord vseth in working of miracles, are such as may seeme to men to haue some power in them for the working of the miracle. As when Moses came to the red sea, he lift vp his Rod, and stretched out his hand ouer the waters. So when he came to the Rock to get water for the people, he strooke the Rocke with his staffe, which seemed to haue some power in it to make the water gush out of the rocke as afterward it did.

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The second sort of meanes which the LORD vseth, are such as haue not so much as an appearance of any force or power, or vse, in the working of the miracle. Such was the hem of Christs garment. The hem of a garment hath not so much as an apearance that it should heale any that are diseased. Such was the hand kercher of Paul to cure diseases, what are hand-kerchers, or swadling clouts (as we may as well say, for the curing of diseases) such was the shaddow of Peter, were vnto some comming were healed of their diseases.

These were wrought when the Apostles were ignorant thereof, and when they were occupied about other matters. But yet it pleaseth the Lord to vse such means although they haue not any appearance of any power in the working of a miracle.

Thirdly, the Lord vseth such meanes as are not available for the worke, but seeme to hinder it, as in curing of the blind man, the clay which was made, and laid vpon his eyes: this Christ (who was God and man (vsed, though it seemed to containe in it a naturall hinderance to the

Miracle. These three sorts of meanes the LORD vseth, to teach vs three notable poynts.

First, hee vseth the first meanes to try the truth of our faith, to see whether wee bee so firme in faith, and whether wee will so wholly rely vppon him, as that we will giue all glory to him for the working of the Miracle, though the meanes vsed doe seeme to haue some power of bringing it to passe we must therefore learne to giue all glory to the Lord whatsoeuer:

Secondly, the second sort of meanes that the Lord vseth, is to teach vs, that it is hee alone that worketh Miracles, and not the Creature which is vsed, his sole omnipotent power doth worke it: Let the meanes doe or be what it will, whether it be any Creature whatsoeuer, or no creature, as was the shaddow of Peter, which was nothing but the absence of light. Let vs acknowledge the LORD to be the onely cause and worker of the Miracle.

Thirdly, the third sort of meanes, teacheth vs to giue nothing to the creature, it selfe which is vsed, which is contrary

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to the opinion of many superstitious people and contrary to all Coniurers, Sorcerers, or Casters of figures: Sathan maketh them to thinke that the Miracle is brought to passe by him, or the meanes which he appointeth, and not by the power of God.

But we must acknowledge that all creatures what soeuer, that albeit the power of Angells be great, yet if all these were ioyned together, yet they were not able to worke the least miracle that could be. This doctrine hath singular vse. First it teacheth vs what a miracle is. Secondly, what a miracle is not: as all manner of appearances are no miracles, whether they be illusions of Sathan, or proceed from the deceit, subtilty and agility of man, none of them are miracles: So the preseruation of mankinde, albeit it be a true worke wrought by God onely, yet because it is a true, vsuall and ordinary worke, it is no miracle, for euery miracle is a rare worke of God.

Thirdly, it teacheth vs that no worke is a miracle which cannot bee felt, smelled, or perceiued by some of the senses:

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when men therefore hold vs in hand that there is a Miracle, yet if we cannot see any thing, feele, smell or tast any thing, contrary to the ordinary manner, there is no miracle wrought. Therefore let the malignant Church of Rome, teach, write, and decree in their Counsells, that there is a Miracle wrought in the sacrifice of their Altar: Yet because I can neither see, touch, smell, nor tast any thing but the same that was before, it cannot be any miracle.

Fourthly euery miracle is wrought by the sole omnipotent power of God.

If any worke bee done by the power of Sathan, or of any man: or any thing bee done wonderfully by the power of Nature, it is no miracle. If Sathan hath power to doe any strange thing, it is a naturall worke, and therefore no Miracle. So also of the good Angells. So likewise if wee see strange thinges come to passe in the Heauens by Naturall causes: wee are not to thinke they are any miracles.

Last of all, if any thing fall out according

ding to the rare strength and power of some Waters, or other creatures, if it fall out by Nature, or if partly by art, and partly by nature, it is no Miracle. Whatsoeuer therefore is not brought to passe by the sole omnipotent power of God, and that is not contrary to Nature, it is no Miracle.

It followeth now to see, how many sorts and kinds of miracles there bee. I meane not how many sorts there bee in Nature, (for so there is but onely one true Miracle) but in name, and as they are called, for so there may be diuers, and thus I gather out of the words of these Pharises: How can man that is a sinner, do such miracles? insinuating thereby, that there be some miracles which sinners may doe, yet not such as CHRIST had done: Out of this place then wee gather, that in name there be two sorts of Miracles. One is a true and diuine Miracle, which is that whereof we haue spoken before, which is an vndeceiuable Miracle, for it is not done to deceiue any, but to magnifie the worke thereof, and for the good of them

them for whom it is wrought, and for the profit of those which behold it: it is called diuine, because it is wrought by the sole omnipotent power of God. Besides this there is false, vaine, and deceiuable miracles, false I say, because it is not this: for what so euer is not this is a false Miracle, and vaine, because it cannot haue any good, godly, profitable, and holy vse to the Conscience of man: and deceiueable, because it deludeth men that are to discerne and iudge of it. This is the miracle which the Pharisees heere speake of, the which is graunted to be done by the wicked. Else where in the Scriptures we read, who are the workers of this miracle, as namely Sathan himselfe doth oftentimes worke it.

So also his Ministers doe often times worke the same, for the holy Ghost teacheth vs, Math. 24. 24. That in the latter daies there shall come false Christs & false Prophets, and shew great signes, and wonders, so that if it were possible they should deceiue the very Elect. We must not immagine that the false Christs shall worke true miracles, but they shall

worke such strange and wonderfull thinges, that they shall carry away many after them: nay if the Lord had not decréede in his secret counsell to saue them that they should neuer fall away, they would also deceiue them. Whereby wee may bee admonished, that seeing wée are in the last age of the world, that fearefull times are at hand, wherein false Christs shall arise and deceiue many. And is not Sathan now strong in the hearts of the reprobates, that they will teach false doctrines?

Now what if Heretiques and Scismatiques should haue power to confirme their doctrine by miracles and strange wonders: would not many beleeue in them? Let vs therefore (as Paul taught the Galathians) prepare our heartes, that if an Angell from heauen teach vs any other doctrine then that which wée haue receiued in the written word of GOD, let him be accursed. The holy Ghost also foretelleth vs, 2. Thes. 2. 9. That before the comming of CHRIST to iudgement, shall appeare Antichrist with al his power, with signes and lying wonders,

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The Holy Ghost doth before admonish vs hereof. That we should not wauer at euery motion, nor fall away at euery tryal, but bee constant; and holde fast the Doctrine which we haue receiued from the Lord by his Prophets, his Sonne, and his Apostles: then although we be tried with Hereticks and Scismatickes, and seeme to our selues and to others to be lost, yet we shall be reserued to eternall saluation.

But some man may say, If Sathan can worke such mirrcles, and the Lord would haue false Christs to arise and worke wonders, how shall we iudge of a miracle that is done, whether it proceed from the Lord or from Sathan and his ministers, from a good cause and worker, or from an euill, and what we are to hold and thinke of the power of Sathan, how farre it reacheth, and what it is able to doe. I answer, that this is a very necessary point to be known, and seeing wee haue entred into the handling of Miracles, wee will shew what miracle can be wrought by Sathan, what is his power, where it beginneth, and where it endeth.

The

The third part of this Sermon,

NOw therefore it remaineth to speake of the power of Sathan. Certain it is, and we are to believe it by faith, that the power of Sathan is not equall to the power of God: It is not so strong, so large, and so wide: it is every way infinitely lesse: there is no comparison betweene that which is infinite, and that which is finite: If we compare it with good Angels, it will be lesse then some, and greater then other some, as afterwards we shall more plainely see: but if wee compare it with the power of man, it is farre greater every way: but yet wee must know that it is a finite and naturall power not supernaturall; for then none could be saued: it is mighty, but yet not almighty. But that we may better conceive of it, let vs see wherein it lyeth, all the power that Sathan hath, consisteth in two points: First in his knowledge or vnderstanding.

Secondly, in his deede, action, or worke. For according as a mans knowledge is such

such is his deede, so is Sathans: as his knowledge is greate, so also his worke's great. For his knowleidge it is to be considered whence it ariseth, and how he commeth by it, so shall we better iudge of the greatnesse thereof. He hath his knowledg by these meanes that follow.

First from his spirituall Nature, for by Nature he is a spirit, and therefore by Nature hath the Measure of knowledge giuen by God to a spirit, which is great. Wee knowe that there is a greater measure of knowledge in man, then is in a brute beast, by reason of that nature which God hath giuen vnto man aboue beastes. So the Diuell is made of a spirituall substance, and of that onely: so that he hath not a body which may hinder him to see into the nature, quality, & opperation of a spirit and therefore being a spirit, hee hath the knowledge of a spirit. In that therefore he is a spirit, he hath a greater familiarity with our spirits then otherwise hee could haue. In regard therefore of his nature his knowledge is great.

Secondarily, the measure of his knowledge may bee discerned by his creation, God

God created him a good Angell, and gaue him the same measure of knowledge that he gaue to other Angels: Loke therefore what knowledge is in a good Angell by creation, the same knowledge is in Sathan by his creation. It may bee that hee retaineth still that measure of knowledge which he then receiued, albeit, as it may be thought, that as man by his fall, lost a great measure of that knowledge which he had by his creation: so the Diuell lost a great measure of his knowledge by his Apostacy from the Lord. Further it is to be knowne, that the Diuell being now fallen, is not of the consultation of the Lord, as the good Angels are, for they stand alwayes before his face, ready to doe any thinge that hee shall command them for the good of the Elect, and therefore they are of the consultations of the Lord, but Sathan is not so, and therefore hee cannot haue so great knowledge as they haue, which is a great comfort to those that be the true children of God, that the good Angels, by the measure of their knowledge, are more able to saue and defend vs, then the Diuell is by the mea-

sure of his knowledge to harme vs.

Thirdly, the Diuell since his fall, hath increased his knowledge, both on the thinges on earth, and of the wayes of God, by long obseruations and continuall experience, who hath alwaies had experimentall knowledge of the nature of man: for he is well acquainted with the age of men; hée knoweth what be their affections, what is their nature, and what is their disposition, he knoweth what things be offensiue to men, he knoweth also what pleaseth them best in their young age, what in their middle age, and what in their old age. And as in these thinges, so also hath hée experience in supernatural things. For he remembreth by whom he hath bin resisted, & who will not yéeld to him. This then must greatly amplifie his knowledge, séeing he hath alwaies had such long experience of all thinges that come to passe. As put the case there were one man aliue which were perfect in sence, in body, in mind, in reason, and memory, and in all the faculties both of the body, and the minde, that hath liued from the beginning of the world vnto this day, and had obserued all

thinges

things that hath fallen out heretofore: this man would tell such wonderfull thinges, both past and to come, by naturall causes, and continuall obseruation, that I feare mee least many would worship him as a God: therefore the Diuel must needs haue great knowledge, seeing that he hath had all these. But he knoweth more then any man could haue done: for he doth not onely know those among whom he liueth, and the thinges that falleth out among them, but hee goeth about into euery family and country, obserueth what is done, and is well acquainted with their conuersation.

Fourthly, besides this he hath also another meanes to encrease his knowledge. When the Lord commandeth him to appeare before him to render accompts of all the workes that he hath done. Iob 1.16. When the children of GOD, that is; the good Angels came before the LORD, Sathan stoode among them, and the Lord said vnto him, Whence commest thou? and he answered, From compassing the earth too and fro: and the LORD said, Hast thou not considered my seruant Iob, how there is none like him in the

earth, an vpright and iuſt Man? Sathan anſwered: It is not for nothing that Iob feareth thee, haſt thou not made a hedg about him and his houſe, and about euery thing which hee hath on euery ſide? but touch all that he hath, and then ſee whether hee will not blaſpheme thee to thy face Sathan knewe well enough, that man will make ſhewe of religion in proſperity, but in aduerſity, by impatience, would fall away: For herevpon the Lord gaue him liberty to afflict Iob, in viſiting his body with ſicknes, in taking away his children, and his goods: but whence hath he this knowledge? from the reuelation of the Lord: he knew that Iob ſhould bee viſited with great ſicknes, and loſe his children and his goods, when he heard it from the Lord, and ſo he knoweth many other thinges which are to come to paſſe, and after he once knoweth them, he goeth to wiches or ſuch like, and tell them thereof, who likewiſe tell others of the ſame before it comes to paſſe, & ſo deceiue men thereby, making them to thinke that they know it of themſelues: but neither they nor the Diuel know it of themſelues, but

but by the reuelation of the Lord vnto Sathan.

Fiftly, Sathan hath another excellent meanes to increase his knowledge which the Lord hath also granted vnto men: for they know what is to come by the reuelation of the Prophets: for if there be any curse belonging to the People, the Prophets doe denounce the same, & make the people to know thereof, by the preaching of the word: whereas therefore the word is preached there is Sathan present: hee obserueth the doctrine, whether it bee of power to bring men from the Kingdome of darkenes, to the Lord: from sinne vnto repentance. If it be, then is hee most busie, either to stop it from the Eare, or to pull it out of the heart, if they haue once receiued it as Mat. 13.19. By this meanes therfore he increaseth his knowledge, that he may worke more couertly, and be the lesse discerned: for he can turne himselfe into an Angell of light.

Sixtly, hee hath yet another meanes to increase his knowledge, and that is by the obseruation of naturall causes. If you speake of an Astronomer, hee can tell that

wold if ye speake of an Astrologer, hee is most cunning therein. Yea that which then gesse at, and as it were groape at in the darke, hee beholdeth and knoweth most certainly, and can tell any thing that is to come to passe, by the course of the Starres, and other naturall causes. If we speake of knowledge in the Arts, there is none comparable to him, hee is most skilfull in all the tongues, and there is no tong that is hid from him. So that by these meanes hee hath wonderfully increased his knowledge. But some may say: hath hee knowledge in any thinge, in which the good Angels haue no knowledge? No, for they are as dilligent for the saluation of the godly, as hee is for their destruction. Psal. 91. 11. GOD giueth his Angels charge to keepe Christ and all that are his, in all their waies: nay they pitch their tents about him that feareth the Lord, to keepe him on every side that no harme befall him any way. And therefore as soone as Sathan had left off tempting Christ, the good Angels came & ministred vnto him all thinges that were requisit for him in this life. But doth not Sathans know-

knowledge serue to the working of a miracle? No, for it is a finite knowledge, and therefore cannot produce any miracle, for euery true miracle is wrought by an omnipotent power.

The second thing wherein Satans power doth consist in his action, or his deede, which as his knowledge is great, so it is likewise great. Let vs therefore see his actions. The deed of perswading is great, for he moued Cain, contrary to his knowledge and contrary to nature, not onely to reuile his brother, but to kill him, he talked not with Cain, but by motions and perswasions in his heart did allure him thereunto. But it appeareth more great in his first action against mankind, as when he came to our first parents in the forme of a Serpent (which argueth his great power, that he can transform himselfe into such a creature, and abuse the tongue of a Serpent to that end) so we read of his actions also in Exodus, when Moses wrought miracles before Pharaoh by the finger of God. Sathan also by his Enchanters did worke the same miracles, yet no true miracles, because they did them not by the finger of

God, but by the power of Sathan. So also 1. Samuel 28. Sathan comes to a witch, and would also tell the Witch what succes Saul should haue in his battell that hee tooke in hand, he came in the shape of Samuell, so that Saul thought he had bin Samuell. So also would he talke familiarly with men: therefore the Lord gaue a law, that if any one consulted with a familier spirit, hee should die, which law had beene in vaine, if none had consulted familiarly with him. So he was a lyer in the mouth of all the false Prophets, although they themselues did not at that time perceiue it. So he possessed mens bodies, as in the Gospell, when our Sauiour had cast him out of a man, hee straight way went into a heard of Swine, and euen so hee is able to draw mens bodies after him. We may also see his power by a comparison with the good Angels. 2. Kings. 19. An Angel of the Lord slew an hundreth & 85000. men of Zenacharibs host in one night. Now ỹ same power is in Sathan by his creation, which heereby appeareth to be very great. So when he carried Christs body vppon a pinacle of the Temple, & vp into a mountaine

taine to tempt him. And Acts 16.19. there were exorcists that would cast forth Diuels in the name of Iesus, but the euill spirit in the man, ran on them and ouercame them, so that they fled out of the house naked, and wounded. It is therefore certaine, that Sathan is of a wonderfull power, and that the children of God haue often-times tryed, both in themselues and also in others. Among many other I remember one that is worthy remembrance,

There was a man in Geneua, who feeling something to fall out contrary to his minde and for diuers causes which is not needfull to repeat, blasphemed God, and desired that if there were any diuels they might come and take him away, who was presently in the ayre, & neuer heard of after, saue onely that his cap fell off his head which sheweth ỹ Sathan hath great power: this teacheth vs that men must not be carelesse, but must look to themselues. For Satan is a roring Lion seeking whō he may soonest deuoure: watch therefore and pray least yee fall into temptation. But if Satans power be so great, how comes it to passe,

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that many men do so well in this world? I answer, this power is barred and limitted by the Lord and that by two especiall limits. The first limit is his Nature, for hee is not able to doe any thing than that which his naturall disposition will permit and suffer. The second limit is, the will of GOD: for he can doe nothing against the will of GOD. Except the Lord doe either permit him or command him, he is not able to doe any thing at all. As it is also in other Creatures, the waters should by nature ouer-flowe the whole earth, yet they doe not because it is the will of GOD. So also is it with Sathan, as appeareth, when the Lord gaue him power of all Iobs goods, beyond the Lords will hee could not goe, for the LORD will not suffer him to doe any thing to tend to their good. Art thou in misery, or in any dangerous distresse, wherein thou art most subiect to the cruelty of Sathan: be of good comfort, Sathan is limmitted, hee cannot doe any thing to thee, but onely that which the Lord commandeth him. But may not Sathans knowledge

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and power bested? I answere, it may. God vseth it in punishing, trying and correcting his children. Against the Apostles vsed his power, for they haue deliuered men to Sathan as Paule did. 1. Tim. 1. 20. Himmeneus & Alexander, & as hee would haue done the incestuous Corinth. But may not a man vse it in familiar sort, in talking, bargaining, & consulting with Sathan? No, This is forbiden. Deu. 18. Leuit. 20. & wee are commanded to resist the Diuill, and to flie from him, wee must not therefore consult with him. Hee may oftentimes tell the truth, but wee must not accept it. Christ gaue vs example hereof, for hee said, that Christ was the Sonne of God, which was a truth, yet CHRIST commanded him to bee silent, to teach vs that the truth is not to bee receiued from him, for hee is the father of lies. Heere then all men are forbidden to take vnto satan, to know any truth whatsoeuer. And therefore hereby we condemne those that vse witchery, by the counsell of Sathan, and in the former places, the very action of consulting with Satan though no harme come thereby, is flatly death to

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the party: I would this law were established in all Christian Churches, then there would not bee so many witches in that kinde, as now there are. I confesse indeed, there bee some which bee counted witches, which indeed are not, as namely those which hurt Cattell, as Oxen, Horse, Swine, or such like, or else children, not frō the counsell of Satan, but by the traditions of other women, by poysoning them, in doeing nothing but using the naturall causes thereof. Those I would have punished, yet not in the name of witches, but in the name of murtherers. Some men think that they may ouer rule Sathan by coniuration in using this preparation, which is set downe by some of late, that they must make a Circle, and in it make triangles, Quadrangles, and rolles, and speake certaine words, as saying the Pater noster and many other such like things, that they may call vp Satan in what shape they will, and he will appeare and doe for them that which they desire. But is Satan a friend of theirs: can any such things make him obedient to man: Doest thou thinke that thou canst ouerrule him by this meanes:

No,

No surely, but he rather by this meanes deceiueth thee and all that are of thine opinion. And thus he deceiueth them that vse Characters. So there be Charmes vsed to get away the Head-ach, and Tooth-ach. But doth the Charme get it away? No, Sathan knoweth before that thy Head-ach shall goe away, and therefore causeth thée to vse that Charme, and thereby would moue thée to ascribe it to the Charme.

But when Sathan whispereth men in their eares, how shall they know whether it be hée, or a good Angell that speaketh to them? I answer, there be diuers manifest tokens, whereby thou maist discerne this.

First the Lord doth not now vse such meanes to reueale his will vnto men: thou art therefore alway to suspect it to bée of Sathan.

Secondly, if it be a good angell, thou maist know by this, for if it be a good angell, it will tell thee either at first or at last, what it is, and for what it commeth, and from whence, as in times past the good Angels shewed themselues to Abraham and Lot.

Thirdly

Thirdly, if he be a good Angell, he will assure the to keep the written word of God, if he doe not, then suspect him.

The Vse.

THe vse of al this doctrin is to lead vs vnto God, to acknowledg him to bee our only Lord & Sauiour, and to embrace the Son of God as our King in al things, therefore we must goe vnto him.

But whereas it is said: How can a man that is a sinner doe such Miracles? it may bee asked whether Gods enemies can worke any Miracles? I answere: he that worketh is not against Christ, but with him: and wee see that those which endeuoured, Acts. 16. to worke a miracle could not. And there was dissention among them.

Herein we see that the Lord doth so worke that Christ and his do finde fauour amongst their enemies, and that by their dissention among themselues. Here we see that Schisme is neither a note of a false Church, nor yet of a true Church, heere it is in a false Church: schisme ariseth of the diuersity of knowledge and iudgment of

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men: for all men haue not one knowledge and iudgement, and all see not the truth, and if they should, yet all haue not the like yeelding affection there vnto. We are therefore to prepare our selues to meete with schismes for it is necessary that there should be Heresies, 1. Cor. 11. 19 and that in the Church of God: that those which are approued might be knowne.

FINIS.